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THE
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A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SEVENTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

THE AID-TO-EDUCATION FUROR

FROM THE OUTSET, President Kennedy's aid-to-education proposal was expected to face more and stiffer opposition in Congress than almost any other part of his legislative program. The first line of resistance will be the economic conservatives, those Republicans and Southern Democrats who close ranks at any threat of "massive spending" or "giveaways." The second category of opponents of federal aid to schools, which overlaps the first, are the political conservatives or states' rightists. To those who see creeping socialism behind every bush, the idea of federal aid to schools has become a *bête noir,* a hated symbol of Orwellian statism.

Added to the critics who complain that the Kennedy proposals "go too far" are, ironically but inevitably, those who maintain that they don't go far enough. Foremost among them are the Negro leaders and Northern liberals who insist that no federal assistance should be given to a state or school district which does not comply with the 1954 Supreme Court ruling on desegregation. Last year, it will be remembered, Rep. Adam Clayton Powell's amendment of the aid bill to this effect provoked bitter Southern resistance and is generally credited with having killed the bill.

This combination of difficulties would be formidable enough in itself, but the Roman Catholic hierarchy has now added a religious problem to the Administration's aid-to-education headache. The Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, consisting of the five American cardinals and ten archbishops and bishops, has served notice on the Congress that it will oppose any aid-to-education bill which does not provide for aid in the form of loans to private schools.

A statement by Archbishop Karl J. Alter of Cincinnati, chairman of the Board, sums up the position of the Catholic prelates in four major points: first, that the question of federal aid to education is "a judgment," on which Catholics are free to take any stand; second, that if there is such aid, Catholic school children should "in justice" be given the right to participate; third, that long-term, low-interest loans to private schools—not, be it noted, grants—are "strictly within the framework of the Constitution" and an amendment to the bill should provide such loans; finally, that a federal aid program lacking such an amendment will be "discriminatory legislation" and there will be "no alternative but to oppose such discrimination."

IN ITSELF, the amendment which the bishops request is really not so radical as the reaction to it might indicate. Many Americans will agree with them that the loans they describe would indeed be "strictly within the framework of the Constitution." The "impenetrable wall of separation between Church and State" has always been and must be a fiction and an impossibility, as shown by our nation's long tradition of chaplaincies and houses of worship for the armed forces; tax benefits for religious institutions; the prayers in Congress, on our coinage, in our pledge of allegiance to the flag; and in numerous other instances. The concern of the state is with the common good, and it is natural for it to encourage private agencies which contribute to the common good, even if these agencies are religiously affiliated. So long as there is no danger of "establishment" or favoring one religious group over another, at least some forms of state aid to such agencies seem not only permissible but sensible; in the fields of health, welfare and even education on the college and university levels, various kinds of government assistance to these agencies have long been commonplace.

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All this does not mean, however, that a great many other Americans will not see the bishops' proposal as a sinister attempt to subvert the First Amendment to the Constitution. It will be pointed out that the extension of federal aid to "private schools" turns out in practice to be the extension of aid chiefly to Catholic schools, which it would strengthen in a quite substantial way. For those who fear and mistrust the Catholic Church, as many unfortunately do, who regard the parochial schools as "divisive and undemocratic," who are dismayed by the gradual widening of Catholic success in winning school bus and aid-to-child measures, the proposed amendment to the aid-to-education bill will not make only a nice question of constitutional theory and interpretation. To them it will represent a monstrous assault on what they believe is the American Way, this being a Protestant or perhaps a secular way, perhaps in some sense a pluralistic way, but assuredly not one which contributes to the wealth and power of the Catholic Church.

Thus a bitter fight over the Administration's aid-to-education program seems now more inevitable than ever. Added to the civil rights dispute and the determined opposition of the conservatives, the religious controversy may add more of a burden than the bill can bear. This will be too bad, because the Administration's program is, under the present circumstances, as good as one could hope for. It is realistic, carefully wrought-out and establishes valuable and significant precedents. Above all, its measures to improve our educational system are manifestly and urgently needed. Even so, when it reaches the floor of Congress, the school bill will have to face a punishing liberal-conservative-Southern-secular-religious crossfire. We hope that its wounds will not prove fatal.

ALGERIAN HOPES

PROSPECTS for peace in Algeria are not as bright at present writing as they seemed to be a week ago. Yet Algerian developments present a welcome contrast to such worsening situations as those found in the Congo, Rhodesia and South Africa. The meeting between de Gaulle and President Bourguiba of Tunisia did not produce as complete agreement as was first hoped; the French are still insisting that a cease-fire precede peace negotiations, while the Algerians want guarantees of "free self-determination" before they will declare a truce. Still, the "secret" negotiations between low-echelon representatives of both sides are continuing. The hope is that a solid basis on which to negotiate may be arrived at so that de Gaulle and M. Ferhat Abbas may soon meet face to face.

There are plenty of questions that will require ironing out. The guarantees of which Robert Barrat spoke in these pages recently will have to cover not only the European *colons*, the large majority of whom are regarded as "poor whites," but also the considerable number of pro-French Moslems, who would be in danger of violent reprisals at the hands of the victorious Algerian nationalists. Another unresolved issue is that of sovereignty over the Sahara with the rich oil resources which France has begun to develop. There is even some possibility of solving the Algerian impasse in terms of a North African federation (Tunis, Morocco and Algeria) friendly to France.

Direct negotiation between France and the F.L.N. has not yet proved possible, and once agreed bases are found for these talks, there are several issues on which negotiations could founder. It is President de Gaulle's statesmanship which is the chief reason for the moderate optimism that continues. His recognition that decolonization offers the only way out, his political vision, his patience and his firmness inspire a degree of confidence that is remarkable in our times.

THE COURT AND THE COMMITTEE

IN ITS CLOSE decisions on the Wilkinson and Braden cases the Supreme Court has illustrated once again the perennial tension and conflict between individual rights and national security, between the limitations imposed by authority and the demands of liberty. And in these decisions it has to a considerable extent, unfortunately, invalidated the Watkins ruling of 1957 and strengthened the Barenblatt decision of 1959.

In these latest decisions the Court voted five to four to uphold in broad terms the investigating power of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. The committee may, as it did in the cases of Wilkinson and Braden, demand of people who have criticized the committee whether they are members of the Communist Party without showing that such information is germane to legislative purposes.

If the vote of five to four shows how narrow the decision was, a comparison of majority and dissenting opinions show how far the Justices are from agreement on the crucial issues involved. The majority opinion stated in the Wilkinson case that

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the Justices were unable to say "on this record that the Subcommittee was not pursuing a valid legislative purpose" and that they were not persuaded by the contention that public censure was the committee's intent. The majority stated further that a man was not immunized from inquiry merely because he had criticized the committee if there was reason to think he had Communist affiliations.

In one dissent Justice Black (with the concurrence of Chief Justice Warren and Justice Douglas) wrote: "I think it clear that this case involves nothing more nor less than an attempt of the Un-American Activities Committee to use the contempt power of the House of Representatives as a weapon against those who criticize it." Without proper limitations to safeguard the individual "the conclusion is inescapable that the only real limitation upon the committee's power to harass its opponents is the committee's own self-restraint. . . ."

Though not in agreement with every reservation of the dissenting Justices, we place ourselves firmly on their side. It is not simply that we believe the great forces of modern history weigh heavily against the freedoms of the individual and that we must be forever alert to guard and preserve them. Nor is it that we question the right, indeed the obligation, of the State—as it channels its authority through the House of Representatives to the Un-American Activities Committee—to work for the common good by preserving national security.

The questions at issue are not to be settled by the clash of abstract principles, nor is the solution predetermined by simple allegiance to "liberal" or "conservative" attitudes that have all but lost their meaning in the terrible fluidity of modern history.

In the decisions at issue, for example, as both the majority and dissenting opinions make clear, some judgment of the House Committee becomes almost inevitable. Justice Black's opinion was made explicit when he spoke of the committee's "own self-restraint, a characteristic which probably has not been predominant in the committee's work over the last few years."

It is the history of this committee—a history of little good, much confusion and harmful acrimony—that emphasizes the need for clearly defined restraints. As the situation now stands in the light of these most recent Court decisions, the committee is free to harass any of its critics if it states as a reason for inquiry a purpose that is even remotely plausible. Such trust should not be demanded of the citizen and, indeed, the committee under Representative Walter has not shown that such trust is merited.

THE PEACE CORPS PLAN

THE KIND of response that greeted President Kennedy's order setting up a pilot model for a Peace Corps program is decidedly appropriate. Enthusiasm is one of the factors most needed to make the idea work. The coming forward of young people from all parts of the country eager to do something positive for their country, other peoples and the cause of peace is an encouraging sign. By the end of this year it is hoped that from five hundred to a thousand of these young Americans will be at their new overseas posts. Nations which will be hosts to these volunteers have expressed their gratification, and in Europe the idea has caught on immediately; several countries are already drawing up plans to send out similar contingents. When so many idealistic young people offer to serve in this fashion, it does kindle the imagination.

What these volunteers undertake to do doubtless appeals to their sense of adventure, but it will demand perseverance and hard work. The climatic conditions will often be arduous in the extreme. These young people will receive no salaries, only allowances that will enable them to live on a bare subsistence scale, under local living conditions.

Much of the effectiveness of the program (about which there have been some strong expressions of skepticism) will depend on the intensive preliminary training. For all the adaptability characteristic of youth, our comfortably brought up young people will need to acquire a realistic idea of the rigors they are about to face. Each must also come to be versed at least to some extent in the language and culture of the land to which he will be sent and to understand that as a friendly ambassador of our democratic way of life he should conduct himself as an implicit witness rather than as a propagandist. Avoiding suggestions of a sense of superiority will not always prove easy.

Besides inculcating appropriate attitudes toward strange peoples and their unfamiliar and often vexatious ways, the first members of the Peace Corps in a few months of intensive training will have to familiarize themselves with the local problems they will confront and develop sufficient technical skills to supply effective answers—in such fields as education, agriculture, construction and public health. The transmission of such skills is what these countries now stand most in need of; the projection of our domestic image in its best manifestations is another leading objective. In sum, the program presents an inspiring challenge all the way.

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GUILTY, WITH AN EXPLANATION

I RECENTLY fell into the clutches of the law—although that may be an overly dramatic way of putting it. What happened was that I discarded a cigarette butt in the wrong place and promptly found myself tagged for violating New York's anti-littering ordinance.

I took the summons that was handed me with as much grace as I could manage, but I must admit that for the first hour or two this was not very much—if only because littering is such a grubby offense, completely lacking in any saving touch of glamor. There was no denying my guilt, though, and on the day appointed I duly lined up in court, cheered at least by finding that I was just one in a sizable company.

As it turned out, the fine was only two dollars; the real penalty was the time involved in a trip to court. But even that I would not count as sheer loss, for the trip took me off the usual home-to-office path of the commuter, into a part of the city I had not seen before. And as usually happens on such occasions, I was struck again with what an affront much of the modern metropolis is to eye, nose, and Christian conscience.

The particular court in which I had to appear is set down in the middle of what the sociology textbooks would probably call a neighborhood in transition. As far as I can see, this means a drab and cheerless neighborhood where no one would live if he had any other choice. In New York, as in most Northern cities, it means a neighborhood where Negroes can afford to live; it means a neighborhood where some of the buildings are already being torn down and where most of them look as if they ought to be.

Given the nature of the offense which brought me there, I'd like to be able to report that the court itself was littered. That wouldn't be true, though. There wasn't one scrap of paper on the floor, but this is about all that can be said. The building itself must have been ugly when it was built, decades ago, and age has not helped. The windows were dirty, the general atmosphere was depressing, and the place reeked with that smell of disinfectant which is every city's greeting to its citizens coming into public places.

None of these complaints, I know, will worry municipal authorities very much. Neighborhoods are decaying faster than they can be rebuilt, and the city has more to do with its money than providing beautiful or even decent surroundings in which to carry on its official business. And if the civil servants one meets on these occasions are barely able to stay civil, the fact remains that they are underpaid and overworked as they try to cope with a mounting tide of problems—including, let it be said, litterers from the suburbs.

This is, if you want, part of the city's case against the people who work in the city by day and go home to the suburbs by night. But we have a case against the city too. All things being equal, many of us would prefer the city to the suburbs. To be near libraries, museums, the theater, one's work and one's friends—these things are worth a lot. But the city asks too great a price, and things are far from being equal.

The city—not just New York but every American city—is fast becoming a place where only the rich and the poor will live. The rich remain because they can pay premium prices for light and space and ordinary decency. The poor stay because they cannot afford to move. And every year thousands who fall into neither category—I among them—simply abandon the city.

This flight poses grave problems, I know. As our major cities decay, the need for fire and police protection, for child welfare services, for jails and hospitals, grows ever greater. At the same time more and more of the people who would normally help pay for such services are fleeing to the suburbs, washing their hands of the city's problems.

In this situation, I can sympathize with municipal authorities, but I don't see any quick solution to the problem. City officials cannot expect people to bring their families back to neighborhoods that are semi-slums. Something has to give, but the trend to the suburbs will never be reversed unless the American city once again becomes a decent place in which to live.

How can this be achieved? It would be pleasant to think that the problem could be left to the conservatives. They are the ones, after all, who insist that local problems should be solved on the local level; the decay of the American metropolis would seem to provide them with an ideal opportunity to demonstrate their thesis. But I have yet to see this standard conservative response translated into a program that could even begin to halt the decay of our great cities, and I fear we cannot count on seeing one at this late date.

We have been nibbling around the edges of the problem of the city for years, with only indifferent success. If we are to win the race against decay and obsolescence, an all-out effort will be required, on a scale far beyond anything we have yet attempted. And as I see it, in such an effort a larger role for the federal government is both necessary and inevitable. This prospect does not frighten me unduly; the problem of the city strikes me as a national problem which is too much for local authorities alone. What does frighten me is the number of people who seem quite willing to let the city decay without raising a hand to stop the process.

JAMES O'GARA.

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Now or Never

Should the test talks at Geneva break down, there is little prospect of controlling nuclear weapons

by RONALD STEEL

THE FINAL days of 1960—a year of fragile hopes and smashed illusions—saw the superpowers enjoying the final days of their nuclear supremacy. A series of distressing events and dire prophecies followed one another with depressing regularity. First came the news that a new process for making cheap atomic bombs threatened to throw open the nuclear club to all applicants. Then in November word filtered down from Geneva that the nuclear test-ban conference was adjourning until February after a summer of negotiations that had reached a dead end. More than two years of negotiation at 273 sessions had drifted into a deadlock that both sides tactily admitted could not conceivably be broken until the installation of the new U.S. Administration. The Soviet delegate said he had "emptied his pockets" and waited for the U.S. to make the next move. The American delegate appealed to the Soviets for some soul-searching, particularly on the issues of inspection teams and on-site inspections of suspected blasts.

As the year neared its merciful end, word came that the French had exploded their third atomic device in the Sahara desert and appeared to be near the perfection of a workable atomic bomb. Hot on the heels of this news came speculation that Israel was building an atomic reactor with French assistance for the production of plutonium that in two years would be sufficient to give Israel an atomic bomb—if she wanted.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science was told by physicist Ralph Lapp that unless the U.S. and the Soviet Union reach a test-ban agreement this year, there will never be any agreement at all. Within a year suspicion and distrust will be too great and pressure in this country for the resumption of weapons testing will be too heavy to permit an agreement, he warned. The same group heard Sir Charles Snow say that we must either accept the limited risks of an agreement to stop nuclear testing, or face the certainty that within six years a dozen nations will be capable of building atomic weapons and that within ten years some of them will be exploded. "Between a risk and a certainty," the British scientist-novelist stated, "a sane man does not hesitate."

An alarming threat to the precarious nuclear balance we now maintain is the announcement of a newly-perfected process for producing atomic weapons materials that may immensely complicate—if not render impossible—any hope of controlling the atomic arms race. Developed from a once-discarded method that has long been known to atomic physicists, the process provides a cheap way of isolating enriched uranium—the key material of the atomic bomb. It is expected to so slash the cost of developing a nuclear arsenal that, according to Senator Albert Gore of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy, "It is possible, if not probable," that within the term of the new Administration, "the capability of producing nuclear weapons will be within the reach of as many as twenty or more nations."

UNTIL NOW the main barrier to the development of atomic bombs by other nations has been not scientific but industrial. At least a dozen powers (including Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, the two Germanies, Israel and China) have scientists capable of building an atomic bomb. This theoretical capacity, however, has not led to actual production of nuclear weapons for a practical reason—the fissionable materials needed for the bomb have required industrial installations of such scale and such vast amounts of electrical power that only the most prosperous nations could afford them. But a newly-refined technique—known as the centrifuge process of uranium separation—threatens to bring atomic weapons within reach of any nation with a team of atomic physicists. Since 1945, gaseous diffusion has been considered

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the only practical method for isolating enriched uranium. The cost has run into billions of dollars and has been a major factor in preventing other nations from embarking on the production of atomic weapons. The three American plants for gaseous diffusion—at Paducah, Ky., Oak Ridge, Tenn. and Portsmouth, Ohio—represent an investment of three billion. They require enormous hydroelectric resources nearby and every year devour fifty billion kilowatt hours of electricity (compared to a total annual electricity consumption of France of sixty-two billion kwh). The very size of the installations and the magnitude of their electrical consumption make it all but impossible to produce uranium 235 secretly by gaseous diffusion.

While the United States—followed by the Soviet Union, Britain, and now France—have continued to rely on gaseous diffusion, German scientists several years ago began experimenting with the discarded centrifugal process they had begun in 1941. One leading scientist, Dr. Gernot Zippe, was captured by the Russians at the end of the war and worked for eight years in the Soviet Union perfecting the gaseous diffusion process. When he was finally released in 1954, he had produced for the Soviets a small laboratory model of the gas centrifuge. Later he came to the U.S. and reproduced a more advanced model at the University of Virginia. Now living in West Germany, Dr. Zippe has been producing centrifuge separators for a private firm—the Degussa Company of Frankfurt.

Degussa obtained a patent on Zippe's centrifuge and began marketing them on a commercial basis. Other companies, both in the U.S. and in Germany, have been engaging in centrifuge research. Brazil has bought three of the German centrifuges, and British and U.S. firms have entered the field by purchasing large interests in some German companies. A U.S. firm located in New Mexico has obtained U.S. rights to another German centrifuge, and has bought seven centrifuges at a total cost of $35,000. The machines are currently in storage at New Orleans until the A.E.C. grants the license that will allow them to be admitted.

Alarmed at the prospect of a rapid spread of nuclear technology, the A.E.C. clamped a "secret" classification on its own perfunctory work in centrifuge separation. The State Department moved to have the West Germans do something about Degussa's marketing of the centrifuges. Last July officials from State and A.E.C. went to West Germany and the Netherlands (which has also been engaged in extensive research) to urge immediate classification of the machines. The politically sensitive West German government ordered centrifuge technology a state secret.

At its present state of development, centrifuge technology does not seem likely to supplant gaseous diffusion as the method for developing atomic weapons. Uranium needed for bombs requires a far higher concentration of pure U-235 than the centrifuge process can now develop. Even at its relatively low rate of concentration, the present centrifuge system can be used to produce materials for atomic reactors. With bigger and faster centrifuges the concentration of U-235 can be increased and, according to Dr. Zippe, its cost can be brought down to make it competitive pound for pound with gaseous diffusion.

REGARDLESS of the method used, the cost of producing atomic weapons is enormous. This will be true even if the centrifuge system should prove to be as scientifically and economically feasible for producing weapons material as it appears to be for atomic power reactors. If scientists now working on centrifuge technology are able to increase sizably the concentration of enriched uranium, they will have justified the fears of the A.E.C. and the State Department in clamping on the secrecy lid. The centrifuge method could pave an easy way to nuclear power status for a host of small and medium-sized powers.

Centrifuge technology would save little, if any, money for the atomic superpowers, largely because of the great scale of their weapons production. Both the U.S. and the Soviet Union have been producing fissionable U-235 on such a large scale that they have been able to amortize billion-dollar capital outlays for huge plants. With both nations producing atomic bombs in the thousands (recently Dr. Ralph Lapp estimated that the U.S. now has a stockpile of one thousand hydrogen bombs and enough atomic materials to produce fifty thousand more), expensive plants have long since been amortized and gaseous diffusion is perfectly suited to its tasks. Raw materials costs average out about the same for both systems. The important difference, clearly, is in capital outlay for plant. For nations that want only a small nuclear arsenal, or even just a few bombs, this difference is crucial.

As atomic weapons become the passport to a voice in the councils of the world (as well as a mace directed at the enemy across the border), scores of medium- and small-sized powers are going to press toward developing their own. If centrifuge technology can yield them a cheap bomb, they will embrace it eagerly. If not, they will embark on the more difficult road already marked by the passage of China, Israel and probably several other powers.

Early last year John A. McCone, chairman of the A.E.C., briefed a Congressional committee on the hazards posed by the new development and by the reluctance of other nations to clamp down on the commercial sale of centrifuges. Knowledge of the perils posed by the new process has not, however, helped break the impasse at Geneva. During the election campaign Senator Kennedy showed concern with the problem when he stated that a test ban agreement

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was of "extreme importance" because "new advances in technology have brought atomic weapons within reach of several additional nations." In last November's *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* the President gave reason to hope that his Administration will make a new effort to reach a controlled agreement with the Soviets on testing. "We cannot really know how grave these difficulties are" (between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.), he wrote, "unless a strong, confident, well-poised United States approaches the Russians with concrete workable proposals in high seriousness." It is now the hard task of the Kennedy Administration to define these proposals for a new approach to a nuclear test ban and to the wider question of disarmament.

At the core of the impasse in test ban negotiations between the U.S. and Britain on the one hand, and the Soviet Union on the other, has been the issue of underground testing. Scientists have little difficulty detecting most atomic explosions—with the exception of those conducted underground. The U.S. position has been that we can sign no all-inclusive treaty unless an agreement can be reached on effectively monitoring underground explosions. Our fear is that unless an air-tight system can be worked out to make cheating all but impossible, the Soviets will secretly carry out small-scale nuclear tests which we will be unable to distinguish from natural earthquakes on our seismographs. To satisfy these fears we have asked them to join us in conducting a series of underground tests designed to improve current methods of detection.

The Soviets have refused to carry out joint research tests; nevertheless, they have demanded the right to inspect explosive devices we intend to use. They have rejected our proposals for a pool of Western and Soviet test devices. President Kennedy has announced our intention of carrying out research tests, but has not set a definite date. Scientists have been going ahead with plans for the blasts—known as Project Vela—and are awaiting the green light from the White House. The Soviets have warned that if the research tests take place without their inspection, they will consider them to be weapons tests and will be free to resume their own nuclear testing.

IN AN ATTEMPT to by-pass this dilemma, President Eisenhower last year proposed that a partial test ban treaty be signed, covering all explosions which could be effectively monitored at that time, but, leaving out small underground blasts until foolproof detection methods were evolved. In accepting the proposal, the Soviets made the important reservation that small underground tests should be included in the moratorium for a period of four years—while detection methods are being perfected. The U.S. made a counter-proposal of twenty-seven months.

The improvement of detection methods has been at the heart of the impasse at Geneva for several months. One of the major points of discord has been the number of on-site inspections which will be permitted in areas of suspicious earth tremors. The Soviets have repeatedly said that they will permit only three such inspections a year on their soil. U.S. officials charge that this figure is totally inadequate and have held out for twenty inspections—the minimum we believe necessary to make cheating so risky as to be unprofitable. Other points of difference center around: the timetable for installing the projected world-wide network of 180 control posts within a six-year period, the composition of the international inspection teams, and scientific criteria for determining when a suspicious earth tremor should be subject to on-site inspection.

There has been strong feeling against the advisability of signing any kind of test ban treaty with the Soviets so long as there is no cheat-proof method for monitoring suspicious underground tremors. While the State Department seems to believe that the advantages of a workable treaty outweigh its risks, there is strong sentiment among some officials of the A.E.C. and the Defense Department that the Soviets are simply stalling and have no interest in air-tight treaty. They believe that in order not to fall behind the Soviets (who may be cheating), we should resume underground testing to perfect our own small weapons.

There are many, however, also deeply concerned with U.S. security, who feel that we have more to lose than we could possibly gain by resuming testing. According to Dr. Hans A. Bethe, who had a key role in developing the atomic bomb, this would allow the Soviets to follow suit with their own tests and could well lead to the loss of our present lead in small weapons technology. In an article in the *Atlantic,* Dr. Bethe stated: "If the Russians really want tactical nuclear weapons—that is, nuclear weapons of small yield—then the best thing for them to do would be to resume testing of such small weapons officially, exactly as was suggested in the original proposal by President Eisenhower."

Moreover, it is Dr. Bethe's opinion that if tests were resumed, the Soviets would shun small underground tests in favor of large-scale tests in the atmosphere (resulting in fall-out) of the big nuclear bombs they deem of superior military value. It should be remembered that in their last tests in the fall of 1958, before the current moratorium went into effect, the Soviets tested not small tactical weapons (as we did in our Hardtack tests in Nevada that October), but the largest weapons they have ever tested.

From the military point of view there is reason to believe that the West can actually gain by an agreement to halt nuclear testing. We could retain our current advantage in tactical weapons while the Soviets would be prevented from further testing of the huge megaton

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bombs. The political gains would be sweeping. The Russians have agreed in principle to setting up control stations on their territory and to a limited number of on-site inspections. If they carry through this agreement, it will be an historic breach in Russian secrecy and the first time they have allowed international inspectors on their soil. It is also likely that the Soviets may be as interested as we are in preventing the spread of nuclear technology to other nations. Having thus far successfully resisted Chinese requests for atomic arms, they can hardly be relishing the prospect of a China armed with nuclear weapons of its own productions. The Chinese have said that they expect to develop their own bomb in 1961.

A TEST BAN agreement is no cure-all for the problems of the arms race. It would not—nor should it—lead to a relaxation of efforts to develop and maintain a successful deterrent. By hampering weapons development on both sides, it leaves each free to work on its own deterrent, thereby continuing to make it unprofitable for the other to attack. An agreed test ban cannot in itself cut down stockpiles of the current family of nuclear weapons, nor additions to those stockpiles. But it can prevent non-nuclear powers from developing atomic arms, and it can call a halt to the refinement of weapons (which makes them capable of more sudden and devastating attack) by the three present nuclear powers. It would not end the arms race, but it could slow it down. By retarding the development of more deadly weapons, a test ban would help ease some of the tensions and fears that have led to the doctrine of the "pre-emptive strike." A test ban is only a first step to the much broader question of arms control. But without this first step there can be no beginning to the eventual control of the production of nuclear materials, the elimination of stockpiles, and the reduction of delivery vehicles.

The Geneva negotiators, who have been stalled for many months over problems requiring Presidential decision, have been awaiting the change of Administration that might result in some modifications of U.S. policy on the test ban and other issues. Admitting the uncertainties of the hiatus between Administrations, the three atomic powers adjourned early in December, scheduling their next meeting for early this year.

President Kennedy thus inherits the draft of a skeleton treaty, but a number of the key issues are still unresolved. It will be his task and that of his negotiators to determine whether the Russians, when presented with seriously negotiable proposals, are truly willing to end the nuclear tests under effective and realistic agreements. They may be unwilling to do so, but we will have done only our minimum duty to ourselves, and the rest of the world, if, in the words of the then President-elect, the "United States approaches the Russians with concrete, workable proposals of high seriousness."

The alternatives are depressingly bleak: a free-for-all resumption of testing, an increasing pollution of the atmosphere, and a belief in the inevitability of nuclear war. Unless both sides make a determined approach to negotiations, we can expect the Geneva conference to break up in suspicion and disillusionment in the face of mounting pressures for a resumption of testing. Recently Dr. Robert E. Wilson of the A.E.C. appealed for resuming underground tests, choosing the autumn meeting of the American Philosophical Society as his forum. Warning the philosophers that the Geneva discussions were as far from ever as resulting in a cheat-proof agreement, Dr. Wilson urged new tests be conducted lest we fall behind the Russians in the production of "fantastic" new weapons (presumably a reference to the "neutron" bomb).

Should the test talks break down, there is little prospect of controlling nuclear weapons. Within a few years they will be spread to a score of smaller powers. Once atomic arms have been so diffused, even the most optimistic would be hard pressed to find hope for an agreement on a test ban. It is an encouraging sign that President Kennedy has indicated a desire for a fresh try at the stalled Geneva negotiations which has been emphasized by his appointment of John J. McCloy as his principal disarmament negotiator.

Some, however, have already prepared for the worst. In a recent report for the Fund for the Republic entitled "Community of Fear," Dr. Harrison Brown and James Real assert that within three or four years there can be no turning back from the arms race. They hold that as belief in the inevitability of nuclear war takes hold the next phase of the arms race will be the construction of enormous shelters. "Eventually most human life will be underground, confronted by arsenals capable of destroying all life over the land areas of the earth. . . . Once the people are convinced that they can survive the present state of the art of killing, a broad and significant new habit pattern will have been introduced and accepted, one grotesquely different from any we have known for thousands of years—that of adjusting ourselves to the idea of living in holes. From that time onward it will be simple to adjust ourselves to living in deeper holes."

In effect there is not much alternative to a test-ban agreement. As our negotiators return to that oval table at Geneva, they must show not only patience—we have been patient for several years with no easing of the perils of the arms race—but a bold and courageous initiative that can break through the impasse while the power of decision is still concentrated in the hands of those nations which feel more chained than liberated by their nuclear arms. Happily, there are now some signs that this initiative has been found.

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The Bugaboo of Planning

by JAMES H. MULLEN

THROUGHOUT the long weeks of last fall's campaign, one of the prime strategies of Mr. Nixon and the Republican Party was to alert the conservative instincts of the American voter, and thus persuade him that the election of a Democratic President would inevitably lead to aggressive government intervention, give-away welfarism, irresponsible fiscal behavior, deficit spending, and ultimately runaway inflation. If not openly articulated, at least implicit in the campaign oratory was the notion that Mr. Kennedy's election would mean the resumption of the "dangerous drift toward Socialism" begun in the early, seminal days of the F.D.R. braintrusters and carried cavalierly on through twenty years of New Deal-Fair Dealism.

The constructive social legislation of that period and its beneficial effects on our society were carefully disassociated from the reckless and doctrinaire liberalism which allegedly characterized the leaders of this period —a liberalism said to predispose them to attempt solutions of all social and economic problems by programs which imposed ever-increasing controls over the free actions of the people. Thus the American voter was confronted with the vision of a scale precariously balanced on its fulcrum, the one end of which contained Free Enterprise and the other State Control, i.e., Socialism.

The purpose of campaign polemics is to exaggerate the dialectical nature of the political process and thus persuade the voter that assumption of power by the opposition party will lead inevitably to intolerable extremes. For practically all Americans, socialism is one of these intolerable extremes, and it is also one of the folk myths of economics that socialism *contra* capitalism is an either/or proposition. Since John F. Kennedy won, are we to see the dire premonitions of the Republican orators fulfilled?

If the process of American politics is dialectical in nature, we must expect reaction to eight years of permissive stewardship under the Eisenhower Administration. The question is not whether such a reaction will characterize the new Administration but rather how strong and sustained it will be. And we must remember that nowhere in the last eight years was Mr. Eisenhower's stewardship more patently permissive than in the realm of the economy.

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DURING THE PERIOD of Republican leadership, the economy has "rolled" through three periods of "readjustment." In the 1953-54 recession, income from production fell by $11 billions and unemployment reached a peak of nearly 4 million (6 per cent of the labor force). In 1957-58 recession income from production declined by $17 billions and unemployment reached a peak of nearly 5 million (7 per cent of the labor force). In the current recession which started in the middle of last year, unemployment increased from 3.4 to 5.5 million in January, 1961. It is likely to go to 6 million before the recession has run its course by the middle of this year. The loss of income from production is anybody's guess, but it may exceed $30 or even $40 billions before the recession ends.

In each of these periods of "readjustment" the Eisenhower Administration took a "let's wait and see" position. This position was always defended on the grounds that intervening prematurely with hasty and ill-conceived spending programs" would precipitate dangerous inflation, and that inflation, not unemployment or loss of national income, is the most serious and continuing threat to our economy.

In each instance the Eisenhower Administration ignored or branded political the calls of experienced Congressional leaders for counter-cyclical action. In the 1957-58 recession, for example, Senator Douglas was unable to persuade Mr. Eisenhower or his advisers either to increase the rate of expenditures for badly needed public works or to reduce taxes. The fact that the economy eventually rolled back to an even keel close to full employment after the loss of billions of dollars of corporate and personal income was sufficient justification, in the view of Administrative leaders, for the "hands-off-during-readjustment-periods" policy. The public was told that in an economy such as ours periodic readjustments are essential if we are to check the virulent menace of inflation.

The record of the Eisenhower Administration in the public sector of our economy has been conspicuously influenced by a single-minded determination to maintain a balanced budget. Thus at the beginning of the last session of Congress Mr. Eisenhower announced his

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support of federal aid to education. He was unwilling, however, to support the McNamara-Hart Bill calling for $1.8 billion per year for new school construction and/or teacher's salaries which passed in the Senate by a two-thirds majority early in the session. The substitute Administration-supported bill, limited to underwriting school construction bonds of less than $600,000,000 per year, was wholly inadequate; its only claim to legitimacy was the fact that it would not endanger the balanced budget. With Congressional leadership divided, the issue went by default, as usual, to those who wanted to maintain the *status quo*.

If the Eisenhower Administration had succeeded by its own canons in maintaining a balanced budget and checking inflation, the economic interventionists would be forced, at least, to admit the internal consistency of this non-interventionist philosophy of government, but here we are faced with a distressing irony. In January the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the cost of living had reached a new, all time, record high in the U.S.—a fact which the Consumers Price Index recorded with monotonous regularity, quarter after quarter, throughout eight years of the Eisenhower Administration.

Mr. Eisenhower's team broke other records as well. They can claim a succession of record-high deficits for peacetime years. In 1954 it was $3.1 billions, in 1955 it was $4.2 billions, in 1958 it was $2.8 billions and in 1959 it was $12.5 billions. Although scarcely noted in the popular press before this year, the balance of payments deficit is not new to our economy. We have been losing capital funds at the rate of more than $1 billion per year since 1954. It was not until after three successive annual losses of approximately $4 billions that Mr. Eisenhower, in 1960, an election year, was moved to suggest to Mr. Anderson that the government should take some kind of action to stop it.

UNDER THE new Administration, the government will unquestionably take a more active role in the nation's economy. We can expect a fiscal policy more attuned to the elimination of the increasingly regular recessions which have characterized the past decade. This may require deliberate rather than inadvertent budget deficits in a given year. It is possible, however, to balance the budget over the business cycle even though it is necessary to incur a deficit in a given twelve months period.

We can anticipate additional social legislation. A Social Security-financed plan for old age medical benefits and a significant program of federal aid to education are at the top of President Kennedy's legislative priorities. An attempt to evolve some kind of permanent plan for dealing with chronically depressed economic areas may well result in a new kind of social legislation. We also look forward hopefully to a more positive program for dealing with the balance of payments problem—one which will not force us to back down on our military and economic aid commitments abroad.

Such programs will undoubtedly mean larger federal budgets in the years to come. But this does not necessarily mean disaster. Many economists believe that in the last decade expenditures for vital national needs in the public sector of the economy, such as education, public housing, highways, conservation and development, have not kept pace with the growth of consumption expenditures in the private sector. Many believe that the slackening growth rate of our economy compared to those of Western Europe and the Sino-Soviet Bloc is in no small measure the result of Mr. Eisenhower's determination not to undertake programs which would reduce consumer freedom through higher taxes or the increased allocation of materials and resources to public needs.

If this estimate of the situation is correct, if the legislative program proposed by Mr. Kennedy is essential to the growth and continued well-being of the economy, does it therefore follow that such a program will push us dangerously close to the shoals of Socialism? Not at all.

THE GENIUS of American culture has been its responsiveness, its ability to adapt itself to changes in its environment while at the same time maintaining its essential values intact. Today, ours is not a "capitalistic" society if we mean capitalism in the classic nineteenth century sense of business owners having complete immunity from government regulation. It is certainly not socialistic, however, if we mean Socialism in the sense of government ownership and control of industry, resources, and the factors of production. There are no federally owned or controlled industries. Even public utilities and transportation systems, which are the prime targets of any socialization program, are privately owned in the U.S.

In reality, ours is essentially a modified private system where businessmen may compete in markets free from government price fixing or production controls. Such government regulation as is imposed is not for the purpose of vitiating private enterprise but rather for the purpose of maintaining the conditions necessary for fair competition.

Ours is a nation where ninety per cent of the primary steel is produced by twenty companies, ninety per cent of the primary aluminum by five companies, more than ninety-five per cent of the domestic passenger cars by four companies, more than sixty-five per cent of the window glass by two companies, where eight of the twenty-six companies with sales in excess of $1 billion per year are found in the oil industry. In such a situation there is obviously a need for some

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government regulation if we are to avoid the cartelization and monopolization of industrial opportunity which characterizes so much of private industry in Europe and South America.

The system of private ownership of business in the U.S. has not only survived a number of periods of severe crisis but has reached a high level not despite but because of the judicious intervention of government for the common good. The dangers to free competition inherent in the trust and merger movements of the early part of this century were avoided by the passage and enforcement of the provisions of the Sherman, Clayton, and Federal Trade Commission Acts. The existence of alert enforcement organizations in the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission continues to be an important deterrent to companies that are tempted to enter collusive agreements or to use methods unfair to competitors or customers.

In the Great Depression of the early thirties, private business enterprise was unable to maintain sufficient initiative to provide jobs and income for nearly one-third of the labor force. This crisis was surmounted with the help of government intervention in the form of public investment and other anti-cyclical techniques of monetary and fiscal policy. We are now reasonably certain that with proper coordination of the flow of government taxes and expenditures and the use of other monetary and credit controls, we can avoid a major business depression—an ill to which the free-market economy is inherently prone.

Through proper planning, initiation of necessary social legislation, and increased attention to the role of investment in the private sector of the economy, the Kennedy Administration may be able to maintain a satisfactory rate of growth, employment for the millions who will be entering the labor force in the next four years, and provide adequately for the common defense. If so, we will avoid the most serious crisis yet to face a free economy and a free society. This is hardly promoting Socialism.

In a nation where $80 billions, nearly twenty per cent of the gross national product, is yearly taken in and paid out of the federal till, it is sheer naiveté to maintain that the government is a neutral agent in the economy. The way in which federal funds are obtained and the purposes for which they are paid out is bound to influence the economy even if Administrative leaders stand by with their hands in their pockets and look the other way. It is reassuring to me, therefore, to look forward to an Administration whose leaders are not indeciduously attached to the old shibboleth that "he governs best who governs least."

REFLECTIONS OF MAURIAC

Under the Eye of God

by JAMES FINN

THERE ARE some authors whose each published work we recognize as an occasion. Sometimes, alas, it is only an occasion to note regretfully how far the latest publication falls short of previous high accomplishments. For many readers and critics François Mauriac has long been one of these authors.

Although he gained popularity outside of France only in the forties and fifties, was awarded the Nobel Prize as late as 1952, and was elected an honorary member of the Academy of Arts & Letters in this country only in 1959, it was in the period of 1922-1932, that Mauriac produced his greatest novels, those which are most sure to survive. These include those spare and penetrating novels, *A Kiss for the Leper, Genitrix, The Desert of Love, Thérèse Desqueyroux* and *Viper's Tangle.*

James Finn is an associate editor of The Commonweal.

For all their uncontested merit, the novels which followed these were lesser works. The change is due, most critics agree, not to a simple falling off of talent but to the resolution, at a profound level, of inner conflicts and divided allegiances. The still obscure story of these conflicts and their resolution must be sought not only in the life of the artist but in the life of his times. Mauriac has given an excellent account of both in several works, most notably in *God and Mammon.* This brief and moving essay, written initially as a response to André Gide, became his apologia as a Christian novelist and it remains the sharpest statement of Mauriac's views on the moral and artistic responsibilities of the artist.

Whatever the theoretical justification for the change in Mauriac, the practical consequences were the artistic decline we have noticed. But this decline, though real,

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should not be exaggerated. It has little in common with that gradual artistic and personal disintegration which forms such a sad and familiar pattern in American letters. Mauriac not only continued to write fine novels after 1932, but he embarked on a brilliant career as a journalist. He gave several years to controversial writings under a pseudonym during the Resistance, later engaged such brilliant polemicists as Gide, Sartre and Camus in spirited debate, wrote plays, regular columns for *Le Figaro* and the left-wing *L'Express*. He also wrote a *Life of Jesus* and, still later, *The Son of Man,* a meditation on the life of Christ. And in the French tradition of a man of letters he also compiled a journal of sorts from his scattered essays.

IT IS TO this side of Mauriac's interest and talent that we are indebted for the two books that have been recently published in this country. *Second Thoughts,* (World. $3.75) subtitled "Reflections on Life and Literature" is a selection from essays which were first published in France in 1948 under the title "Journal 1932-1939." Here, with his fierce and partisan energy, he comments on many of the writers who have engaged his attention—on Proust, Shakespeare, Renan, Du Bos, Lawrence, Racine and, as always, on Gide. Here he writes of literature and sin, of old age, of solitude, of war. That sharpness which one associates with his criticism is never completely absent. For example, he begins his consideration of Giraudoux by saying "The critic's art consists in commenting when he should keep quiet, in being blind to what he should see, and in ignoring obvious clues that an author scatters recklessly on every page." It is Mauriac's gift that he is not blind, that he points to clues that others have long ignored and that he is far from keeping quiet.

But it is the second book *Mémoires Intérieurs* (Farrar, Straus and Cudahy. $4.75.) that is most interesting. It ranks, I think, among the finest things that Mauriac has done. It is not, in any strict sense, an autobiography, though it tells us much of the author. As Mauriac writes, "Our reading brings about a change in us, but we have also left our imprint so clearly on what, in it, has mattered most to us, that to speak of it is enough to give ourselves away." And this is, in a sense, what he attempts to do—to give himself away by commenting on the varied reading of a lifetime.

It should be said at once that the unsympathetic critic will find here much to reject. Mauriac does frequently seem narrow, harsh, even bitter and jaggedly sarcastic. He seems, moreover, impervious to the values of many of the younger French writers such as Nathalie Sarraute, Robbe-Grillet and Butor. He seems, at times, almost perversely old-fashioned, as though he could not turn his eyes from the literary gods and companions of his youth and middle age. In one disturbing and distracting outburst, for example, Mauriac writes:

"Ah! I can fight no longer. I who have been more deeply involved than most of my juniors in the catastrophic story of our modern world, will put no compulsion on myself to love it. Nothing can alter the fact that, my age is what it is, and that for the last twenty-six years I have been a mere survival. I ought, by rights, to have died in 1932. I find nothing now to please me in this lunatic and bloody-minded age with its ubuesque techniques, its torture-chambers and its adults so debased by the cinema that *Tintin* is their chosen favorite, and that their daily paper can avoid bankruptcy only by teaching them history and literature by means of infantile strip-drawings. It is an age which can see no difference between the silence of a Rimbaud, a Mallarmé, a M. Teste and the inarticulate mutterings of imbeciles."

Further, in a passage which recalls Henry James' comment in his old age that "promiscuous fiction has become abhorrent to me," Mauriac can say: "It is an undoubted fact that I have almost entirely given up the reading of poetry. It is no longer a necessity for me. The same is true of novels. I scarcely open them, except in the way of duty, or because I still feel some faint curiosity about the craft of fiction."

YET IN spite of these attitudes and of all the objections one may bring to Mauriac's introspective reflections, *Mémoires Intérieurs* is a work of a very high order. For Mauriac continues to write brilliantly within a great tradition of moral commentary and criticism. For him the great problems of the human condition remain forever the same. "All things continue" he has written. In every age, under whatever guise, the central questions concerning nature and destiny of man thrust themselves forward. And he looks to the great literary works for the illumination they shed on these problems and for the position of the living man behind the work. But not only works ordinarily called "great" but to lesser writings that better reveal the man, and not only works that are "literary" but to Pascals *Letters* and Newman's *Apologia* as well as to Baudelaire's poems and Balzac's novels.

Nor does he need to reread the poems and novels, for he now possesses with a tenacious and loving memory the books that once possessed him. And as he ranges familiarly up and down the centuries these recollected writers become his contemporaries. "All my living springs communicate." Racine and Rimbaud, Newman and Proust, Hawthorne, James and Constant —all speak to Mauriac and he responds with a mind that is still sharp, emotions that are quick and an attachment to life that is still great.

What might seem like hobbling restrictions, or at least dangerous pitfalls, in this approach to literature—so alien to the dominant critical spirit in this country —is in Mauriac's skilled hands a means of liberation.

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He at once illuminates the work and his own inner life which has been fed so richly by books. He leaves little doubt about the bases on which his opinions are so surely anchored. Teilhard has said that "The Cross has always been a symbol of conflict, and a principle of selection, among men." These words could have been written by Mauriac whose every work is suffused with the sense of that statement. It is apparent in his judgment of Gide, whom he takes more seriously than many an enthusiastic critic who would clasp Gide to his critical bosom.

"The extremely important part played by Gide in my own life," he writes, "derives from this choice which he made, without any attempt at concealment, at one definite moment. . . . No one can have laid a bet against Christianity more calmly, more rationally. . . ." Because of Gide's deliberate break with the moral law in its Christian form, Mauriac judged the award of the Nobel Prize to Gide to be an amazing, even a terrible thing. But of Gide's work he can say, nevertheless, "It is among the most significant of our time."

The sense of Teilhard's statement is apparent too in Mauriac's juxtaposition of Newman and Marx, pointing to merits and deficiencies in each. It is there in the way he brings to life what for him has never died, the controversy surrounding Pascal and Port Royal. It is there in his assessment of *The Scarlet Letter* and of Giradoux. For if "all things continue" for Mauriac, they continue under the eye of God.

WHILE SO much is true of Mauriac it is a cold and inadequate way of describing the responses of this engaged and passionate man. In so far as it suggests the application of abstract principles to another man's work it is at the farthest remove from the truth. When he set out in his career there was graven in his mind, he writes, a saying of Lacordaire: "Sooner or later one reaches the point where one is interested only in souls." And Mauriac adds, "I should have preferred him to say 'human beings,' because it is the heart of flesh and blood that really matters to me."

Mauriac has never departed from this credo, nor has that spare and poetic style in which he has expressed his concern failed him. To describe his style as poetic is to risk misinterpretation, but it is the word he himself would justly apply. He has for years been the poet of unsatisfied longings and thwarted desire, of old age and mortal corruption. Even while the blood courses hotly through the veins of a Mauriacian character we are made aware of that time when the senses will cool and the flesh sag upon its weary frame. And now, in his old age, he can invoke with a tangle of emotions the boy he once was, who filled this world with wonder, the adolescent who wrote lyric poems, the young man who wrote great novels. From all his writings, but particularly from *Mémoires Intérieurs* there emerges the image of a man who, with all his contradictions, cares passionately for the heart of flesh and blood, that labors under the eye of God. This is a rare and beautiful work of a rare and beautiful man.

VEXILLA REGIS

Venantius Fortunatus: Latin, Sixth Century
Trans. by Joseph P. Clancy

The banners of the king advance,
The cross is bright with mystery:
On that gibbet hung suspended
The flesh of him who made all flesh.

Hands and feet stretched out upon it,
Nails had pierced their tender parts:
For the sake of our salvation
This the victim sacrificed.

Wounded as he hung above it
By the lance's dreadful point,
Blood and water flowed from him
That would wash our sins away.

Now the psalm that David sang
Has its promises made good
The prophecy to every nation:
God upon a throne of wood.

Beautiful the tree and splendid,
Royal purple gracing it,
Chosen as the wood most worthy
To support those holy limbs.

Blessed tree, your branches held
The ransom of all time and space:
You, the scale that weighed his body
Taking Hades' prize away.

Fragrance rises from your bark,
You surpass the nectar's sweetness,
Delicious fruit and plentiful
Wins for you a hero's triumph.

Welcome altar, welcome victim
Of the glorious agony:
Life then gave itself to death
Bringing death to life again.

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THE STAGE

ON NATIVE GROUNDS

MR. STUART VAUGHAN and the Phoenix ensemble have given to Dion Boucicault's *drame bourgeois* of a century ago so striking a presence and so vivid a voice that it emerges as one of the barren season's few events of commanding interest. Some measure of the temerity involved in mounting "The Octoroon" may be inferred from the activities, doubtless at each performance, of a gaggle of East Side rubes, sophisticated, to adopt Mr. T. S. Eliot's phrase, beyond the point of civilization, and determined to make of the occasion an arena for public exhibitionism. Their hisses and hoots—intolerable to the players and an offense to the civil audience—are perhaps supremely the last reflection on their own arrested and complacent juvenility: comparable to the vehement approbation elsewhere accorded anti-Catholic wisecracks or the recital of tatty liberal platitudes, and to that urgent applause conferred on the actor who unaccountably negotiates his exit without tripping over a cocktail table. Such, however, are the prevailing pieties of Broadway: studies in the sociology of the fatuous and the vulgar.

Which is not to suggest that Boucicault himself would have disdained such manifestations: he sought always—it is the witness of his contemporary, Henry James—"absolutely, consummately and irresistibly to please," and the engaging "Octoroon," with its genial and easy speciousness, its chocka-block invention and amiable promiscuity of sentiment—ready, as it were, to oblige *on popular demand*—can never have failed to do so mightily. James, indeed, has left a potent, bristling sketch of the kind of play at which Boucicault excelled, and which flickers for us, with lurid, dusky charm, in the vacuum of the nineteenth-century American theater. "There is no particular writing in it," he observed, "but there is an infinite amount of acting, of scene-shifting and of liveliness generally; and all this goes on to the tune of the finest feelings possible. Love, devotion, self-sacrifice, humble but heroic bravery, and brimming Irish bonhomie and irony, are the chords that are touched, and all for five liberal acts, with a great deal of very clever landscape painting in the background. . . ." *Plus ça change,* shall one say, with certain inevitable modifications: for the drama critic, the melancholy of such a passage must be akin to that of the social philosopher who finds Matthew Arnold, in *Culture and Anarchy,* to be describing exactly our contemporary predicament.

To distinction, then, "The Octoroon" but indifferently aspires; of intrinsic virtue it commands little, and even the political actuality some claim to find mirrored in it I think dubious. ("Times were dark and tensions were high on opening night," runs a program note, "with the Civil War one year away." I like to fancy one of those 1859 players soberly predicting this to another as he applies his lampblack and carmine.) Yet for the student of manners, of theatrical modes and aesthetic vagaries, it is, like so many works of the second or third rank, a valuable document. What fascinates in "The Octoroon" is the disposition and place—within its agreeable farrago of sensation—of motifs to which the continental dramatists would bring a more searching stain and pressure of reality. The counterpoint of intrigue, as an instance, which "The Octoroon" succulently exploits, would become for Ibsen ("a boneless codfish" to Boucicault!) the gathering web of fatality—yet one recollects Ibsen's long and early apprenticeship to the theater of 'Sardoodledum,' and may make an ironic reflection on the sources from which the aesthetic will derive often its most signal victories. Again: the theme of the *rentier* aristocrats challenged by raw acquisitiveness and guile, Boucicault plays for each of its rippling *frissons.* Chekhov would see it later as a metaphor of the ineluctable passage of society, and a tragic parable of dispossessed spirit.

One is speaking here less of talent than of a fundamental intention—commitment perhaps—and Boucicault certainly, with his chameleon's assumption of the moment, his shrewd intuitions of human substance and value, and dextrous refusal to follow those into any last resolution, whether of light or disaster, is a prophetic figure in the history of American drama. Which is finally to say: he had, Boucicault, to a notable degree, that theatrical faculty—"the contagious presentation of the matter to be shown," Mr. Stark Young calls it, "this instinct for persuasion, magnetism, diversities in glamour, whether low or superb"—to which the American imagination and response have been specially indulgent, from Boucicault through Belasco to Mr. Joshua Logan. And if it wants elegance or austerity, realism and conviction, one kind of sincerity at least cannot be denied to such a faculty: the naive and spontaneous pleasure in its own gusto.

Mr. Vaughan has been wisely moved to allow this quality its fullest statement, and to resist the solicitations of parody or burlesque. The rhetoric, of course—all going on "to the tune of the finest feelings possible"—he cannot reconstitute, and his actors must negotiate it precariously. Yet those distant, lachrymose melodies lend a heightened pathos to the event. I visited, shortly after attending "The Octoroon," the exhibition of Matthew Brady's photographs c. 1860, in the course of which—arraigned by those square, graceless, unillusioned and relentlessly *there* countenances—I remembered Henry James' intuitions of their English contemporaries: "These people are too highly moral to

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be histrionic; they have too stern a sense of duty." Yet it was just such faces and such souls that roiled in distress at Boucicault's gaslit vision of absolute good besieged by evil incarnate. And one must conclude that he released some impulse in them, some vagrant dream or thwarted sensibility of nobler and more distinguished aspiration. "The Octoroon" survives by theatrical knavery and guile—quite so—but equally by its image, however ambiguous or unconscious, of the good. One might ask whether many contemporary plays of its order may claim so much. RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

BACKDOOR TO FAME

NOT HAVING read Robert Crichton's book about Ferdinand Waldo Demara, Jr., but having heard so much about the exploits of this fabulous liar, I approached the film of "The Great Impostor" with apprehension. But due to the efforts of producer Robert Arthur and director Robert Mulligan, the movie is done with simple charm and a high spirit of adventure. They and scriptwriter Liam O'Brien make little attempt to explain Demara (perhaps no one can) but they do illustrate, in flashbacks to his youth, the boy's drive for success and fame through short cuts. They show, further, his inability to understand the axiom of his parish priest (Karl Malden): "One of the most difficult parts of life is facing reality."

Tony Curtis has caught well the man's sense of adventure and fun; and his lively portrayal bounces with energy as he slides from one incident to the next. For example, Demara not having a high school diploma, goes A.W.O.L. from the Army, enlists with false credentials in the Marines where he hopes to become an officer, but walks out on them too when he discovers the F.B.I. will investigate his papers. Using the same false credentials, he is accepted as a novitiate at a Trappist monastery; but the abbot (Raymond Massey) soon discovers he is not suitable material.

After serving in prison, Demara takes on the identity of the warden and gets a job as an assistant warden in a penitentiary where he does a fine job as a penologist. Demara is indeed no slouch. But ironically enough, success and fame spell his downfall—for a while at least. He poses as a doctor in the Royal Canadian Navy, and when he operates on nineteen Koreans aboard a destroyer, his new name and identity make the headlines. The combination of very serious matter and slapstick seems poorly controlled in this episode. I wish the movie could have delved a little more deeply into this extraordinary man who didn't like himself very much and who wasted fine talents in impersonations. His escapes from reality and his life-as-a-lark attitudes make Walter Mitty seem like a piker.

ALSO FULL of bounce is Walt Disney's new comedy called "The Absent-Minded Professor." Unfortunately it isn't full of much else, although its good cast works hard enough and often succeeds in coming up with some hilarious sequences. The screenplay, written by Bill Walsh from a story by Samuel W. Taylor, centers on a professor of physical chemistry at Medfield College who combines energy with rubber and calls this new flying rubber, which resists gravity, "flubber." Fred MacMurray gets the most he can out of this role that combines the dated idea of a fuddy-duddy prof with the modern version of the scholar with his eye on Washington. He is well supported by Nancy Olson, the attractive woman he has three times forgotten to meet at the altar; Elliott Reid, his sneaky, poetry-reciting rival for Nancy's hand; Keenan Wynn the mean rich man who sees unlimited possibilities for flubber and is furious when Fred wants to offer it to the Government; Tommy Kirk, Wynn's stupid son whom Fred flunked; and various other players of character roles that add to the fun: Edward Andrews, Leon Ames, Alan Carney, Ed Wynn, Wally Brown, and especially Belle Montrose who is simply wonderful.

Not having much story to tell, the picture does all it can with flubber. We see Fred working on his experiment, with lots of test tubes and retorts and noises (like those in "The Man in the White Suit"), and soon there are rubber balls bouncing madly all over the lab. We see Fred putting flubber in the shoes of the college basket ball team and then the boys bouncing around the gym and astounding the rooters as they shoot phenomenal baskets. We see Keenan Wynn bouncing up into the skies when flubber gets out of control. And, funniest of all, we see Fred and Nancy flying over Washington in his flubberized Model T Ford—which upsets the Defense Department considerably. Kids will no doubt be delighted with director Robert Stevenson's exhibition of energy and bounce; but adults may wish that the film had a little more of the substance and satire that the story only hints at.

ADULTS who laughed and cried whey they saw "The King and I" on the stage in 1951 and the later movie version can get that sentimental glow all over again. The handsome 1956 film is being reissued in a new process called "Grandeur 70" which adds greater depth and clarity of color to the original movie and has a six-channel stereophonic sound track for the fine Rogers-Hammerstein score and lyrics. "The King and I," with its beautiful costumes and sets and nice, warm story enacted and sung by Yul Brunner, Deborah Kerr and a fine supporting cast certainly de-

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served to be reissued. If the plot seems a little too saccharine at times and the English governess's costumes too elaborate, it's because this is musical comedy at its most elegant. The film's lavish staging and the touching story are all as much a part of the show as such charming songs as "Getting To Know You," "Shall We Dance?" and "Hello, Young Lovers." And Jerome Robbins's brilliant ballet to "The Small House of Uncle Thomas" seems better than it did the first time round. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"AGE OF THE LAITY?"

Edmond, Okla.

TO THE EDITORS: In "Age of the Laity?" [Feb. 24] I thought James O'Gara was rather mildly stating the frustration of the apostolic layman in today's Church. It seems almost unbelievable to imagine parishes not utilizing, challenging, and developing the outstanding laymen who live within their borders, and yet this is so.

As I think of many parishes, containing college graduates, professional people, lawyers, executives, teachers, etc., and being challenged with participation in a weekly bingo or stag party, I become sick. The world is crying for help in almost every area, yes, even financial. The coldness of urban life needs to be warmed, newcomers in the neighborhood need to be welcomed into one's personal life, a sense of making a contribution needs to be instilled in so many isolated members of society, the fallen-away needs to be called on, the non-Catholic needs a new image of the Church given to him by his friendly Catholic neighbor, business and labor need to rethink their positions from an ethical point of view, the poor need to be defended and the powerful brought low, in almost all phases of life the Negro needs to be shown justice, the responsibility of educating children needs to be restored to the parents, the roles of husband and wife, mother and father need to be re-thought.

Every secular college campus needs help and time from intelligent and forward-looking Catholics in Newman work. Catechetical schools need the very best of the laity to be teachers. Leisure time stands in need of a real overhauling, and of course how desperately we need the laity to share in our effort to make every moment of the Liturgy full of meaning.

When we see all this, it is rather difficult to be as patient as James O'Gara. It is a wonder that more angry voices aren't heard from. The Church is filled with people loaded with talent, education, insight, willingness and time. The world cries for redemption. Our parishes must simply become living centers to collect, inspire and project the laity into this task. The greatest waste in the Catholic Church to my mind is the untapped resources of the fine personnel we have at hand within the Church. We pastors will have to answer to God not so much for neglecting the five personal talents He gave us, but rather for not using the five hundred talents existing in each parish. It must be indeed extremely frustrating to the apostolic layman to see his parish carrying on so listlessly, not facing problems and not involving the laity more meaningfully.

I would offer one word of advice to the layman. For heavens sake, relate the reality of the world to the pastor, tell him how the laymen can be formed and put into action, offer to help the pastor to do this. If the pastor fails them, he must face God for this neglect, not the layman. *(Rev.)* WILIAM NERIN.

BOOKS

The Claudelian Hero: Secular and Religious

TWO DRAMAS: *Break of Noon* and *Tidings Brought to Mary*. By Paul Claudel. Translated and introduced by Wallace Fowlie. Regnery. $4.50.

By SAMUEL DRAPER

TRYING to assess Paul Claudel's art or even part of it in a small space reminds me of the child whom St. Augustine saw trying to gather the sea into a little shell. Unlike that youngster I will be satisfied if I can assemble at least a few thoughts about what Claudel meant in two of his most important plays, available for the first time in excellent English translations.

Before these accurate and lively translations, few Americans could come or did come to terms with Claudel's complex French. Now these readable and playable versions give everyone the opportunity to make his own judgment of this controversial playwright. I do not wish to argue here Claudel's position in contemporary literature nor debate his greatness. (He is a complicated poet-dramatist whose value is disputed; his admirers believe him as great as Dante and Virgil and his disparagers as obscure and flamboyant as Gongóra.) Claudel frequently articulated his beliefs and his art, but we can best appreciate and understand what he intended by subjecting ourselves to his work.

Although Claudel's *Break of Noon* (*Partage de Midi*) was published in 1906, it was first performed in 1948 in Paris by Jean-Louis Barrault's Théâtre Marigny.

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During rehearsals for the premiere, Barrault and Claudel collaborated in making a new version, the final text of which was played and used for this translation.

La Jeune Fille Violaine was the first title for *The Tidings Brought to Mary (L'annonce Faite à Marie)* published in 1892. Not until 1948 did Claudel allow the complete play to be printed. Claudel's constant reference to this drama throughout his life indicates his devotion to *The Tidings,* which was inspired by an old German story of a woman who brought a dead child to life by feeding it from her breast.

Break of Noon is drawn from an experience in Claudel's life. The four characters who enact this tragedy are deeply affected by the overhead sun after which Claudel named the play—that break of noon or midway mark in the characters' lives. Exactly at midday each of them experiences a change in his destiny which results in the suffering and sacrifice of two principal characters. Their death occurs at midnight, the darkest hour, the other midway point in a day's cycle. By the end of the drama, these two see what happened to them at noon as necessary pain and destruction, to be endured before they can seek or risk death together—that nocturnal adventure of eternity.

The play concerns itself with seduction, martyrdom, and adultery as it probes ever more deeply into the conflict between a religious vocation and carnal love. Claudel is not attempting to analyze conjugal love but rather to develop a study in passion around this quartet: Ysé, a sensuous and carnal woman whose love conflicts with Mesa's spiritual love; Mesa the poet, a visionary, unfulfilled and incomplete who does not admit that human love has restrictions; Amalric, the adventurer who will make his fortune tomorrow; De Ciz the ineffectual husband of Ysé, kind but mediocre. Ysé possesses in turn each of these men.

Mesa and Ysé realize that they have been destined to know and love each other. No matter what their present status, their past, their internal conflicts, they accept their love as a transforming experience in their lives. Although Mesa is a virgin and has unsuccessfully sought a religious vocation, he cannot resist Ysé or his fate at the break of noon. She is also helpless in their struggle. They exist in that great tradition of lovers who are meant to love, suffer, and die together.

Both Mesa and Ysé believe that complete possession of God and each other can be realized only in death. Claudel never lets them consider the possibility of harmony in a unification of their carnal and spiritual desires. Could not Ysé and Mesa love each other and still love God? The presupposition of this play is that a man and woman so totally dedicated to each other find everything and everyone else irrelevant and unimportant—including God. Claudel believes that lovers can never know God's love unless they live through the pain of having sinned. Claudelians will point out that Claudel *does* value married love, but that he intended, in this play, to show that courage and repentance may be developed by lovers in their battle against sinful or adulterous love. *Break of Noon* suggests that Mesa's and Ysé's love, earthly and vain, strong and passionate, will usurp the love they owe to God. But it also implies that God's grace, and love, will more than compensate for whatever sacrifices are made in terms of human love on earth.

Had Mesa known what the characters in *The Tidings Brought to Mary* discover, he could have avoided his tragedy. The story of Violaine, who bears tidings to the Blessed Virgin, is a mystery play comparable to those of the Middle Ages, a liturgical *fête* in which the conflict in Violaine's soul is unrelieved. Such tenseness confirms that the way to God is difficult, and His actions are mysterious and inspiring. We feel that God's hand touches Violaine.

When Violaine is banished as a leper, Anne Vercors, her father, becomes even more detached and resigned to God's will. He knows that Violaine is a greater Christian than he. Her simplicity and sacrifice prove to him that God does not require him to travel on pilgrimages to foreign lands as he once thought. Violaine teaches him the true meaning of detachment. Suffering and death, Claudel says, are to be accepted willingly by the Christian no matter how humble or exalted.

Violaine is able more easily to lead Anne, an upright man, to the supernatural than to save others from their mediocrity and crassness, or to influence the spiritually crippled. "A Christian soul can be made from a pagan soul," Péguy writes (as if describing these characters) "but what shall we do with those who are nothing . . . neither spiritual nor carnal, pagan nor Christian, those living dead?"

Claudel shows that each of his characters must suffer deep disappointments in order to uncover in himself a hunger for something which transcends human existence, alleviates his pain, gives him hope and courage, and a place in *this* world. Once man finds God, he has a place here and in the world to come. In suggesting that man has a special *designed* place in the universe and a sense of belonging, Claudel's poetry runs counter to most modern writers. They speak of man's alienation and estrangement —his separation from the world with which he has lost communication. But Claudel writes of man's place because he believes in God.

The Claudelian hero cannot dispense with God. Knowing that all attempts to limit his happiness and accomplishments to the visible world are futile, he finds hope in his despair. If he accepts God's grace, he can benefit from a sense of "belonging" on this earth and in the world to come. If he is able to make the slightest effort to approach God, he will discover Violaine's secret: eternal happiness. Although tragedy strikes man, and worldly events threaten and disrupt his existence, Claudel always replies: "He is never forsaken by God. Christ on the Cross does not cease to labor." These words, as well as his poetry, are a *credo* which declare his beliefs. Writing for Claudel was a religious exercise, a way

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of communicating with God. These plays demonstrate once again the close relationship Claudel found between the essence of poetry and of prayer.

Aspects of Teilhard

PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN: HIS LIFE AND SPIRIT. By Nicholas Corte. Translated by Martin Jarrett-Kerr, C. R. Macmillan. $3.25.

By CHARLES B. SCHMITT

WE NOW have another book in English devoted to the controversial French Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. This is the fourth book to appear in English during the past two years on this influential thinker (not to mention the many journal and newspaper articles). As a paleontologist and geologist of the first rank, his contribution and authority are well recognized. However, his more popular—or perhaps "general" is a better word—works such as *The Phenomenon of Man* and *The Divine Milieu,* in which he enters a no-man's-land touching on biology, physics, anthropology, theology, and philosophy, have incurred the attacks of scholars from all of these fields and more.

M. Corte's brief, but illuminating, introduction to Teilhard attempts to sketch in and evaluate his intellectual and religious development against the current background of criticism, favorable and unfavorable. The English edition is preceded by a brief, but important, preface by Martin Jarrett-Kerr C. R. which shows Teilhard primarily from his deeply human and Christian aspect. Since this side of Teilhard is seldom seen by the English reader, it is to be hoped that Claude Cuénot's brilliant biography (at present the definitive work on the biographical details of Teilhard's life) will also soon be given an English translation.

At the outset M. Corte states that we cannot yet hope to study Teilhard exhaustively because of the many unedited writings and unknown letters that remain to be studied, but what he does attempt to do here is to give a brief preliminary sketch of the man and the development of his thought. What is rightly emphasized is Teilhard's development from the early years of great scientific vigor and curiosity concerning the phenomena of nature to the tendency to reflect on the general meaning of these phenomena and to interpret them in terms of the Christian message, an attitude that becomes increasingly apparent with Teilhard's growing maturity.

Teilhard had two great loves, nature and God, and his importance in the twentieth century is as one who attempts to sum up the modern sciences and philosophies and to show their basic compatibility with the Christian tradition. Indeed he sees modern thought itself, rather than being completely inimical to Christianity, as giving a richer and deeper meaning to the Christian theology and religion. Much in the same way as St. Thomas studied the philosophical and scientific traditions of Plato and Aristotle, of Avicenna and Averroes, of Avicebron and Maimonides and culled from them the tools for the erection of his great Christian theological structure, so too does Teilhard draw from Leibniz and Spinoza, from Hegel and Bergson, from Darwin and the anthropologists the seeds of a new philosophy of nature and indeed even a new approach to natural theology, an approach which gives an ever ex-

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panding and deepening understanding of God and God's world.

Much different than the first Christian reactions to the theory of evolution is Teilhard's attempt to see evolution as something which gives Christianity a fuller meaning, something, as is pointed out in M. Corte's book, that makes man the "soaring arrow" of the universe, who "holds in his hands the future of the universe." Further, as Teilhard argues in *The Phenomenon of Man,* evolution is the dynamic, ever-changing context in which we are placed and which colors every aspect of our thought. It is not something that can be accepted or rejected, but something which forces itself upon us as we observe the everyday world. Teilhard's views are an attempt—admittedly a preliminary and sketchy one—to see man, his nature and purpose, in the dynamic physical and biological context in which he is placed.

M. Corte's book emphasizes Teilhard's two great drives to achieve scientific and theological truth, the urgency of which consumes the man and produces in him a hopefulness and optimism for the future, uncommon in this time of *Angst,* pessimism, and doubt. Perhaps his key position in history is best characterized by his own phrase written in the 1920's, "I am a Pilgrim of the future, but I have come from a voyage which was all in the past." Indeed it must be left to the future fully to judge Teilhard's importance, but certainly his attempts to cope with some of the most pressing difficulties of our times are extremely suggestive to all who succeed him.

One Man's Story

CONFESSIONS OF A SPENT YOUTH. By Vance Bourjaily. Dial Press. $4.95

By THOMAS CURLEY

SINCE A number of people whose opinions I respect like Bourjaily's work, I'm going to say briefly why I cannot like this novel. *Confessions of a Spent Youth* is a

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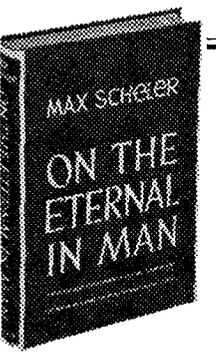

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To the Occasional Reader:

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story, told in the first person, of the life, from seventeen to twenty-four, of a man named Quince. His final and most important motive for writing is simply stated: "I confess because I want to tell some truths." At the end of his story, some four hundred pages later, he asks his reader if he was one of the great sinners and sufferers. In his judgment he was not; just average; a specimen of how a contemporary youth was spent. In between we read of his introduction to sex, his later loving and whoring and drinking, his experiences with marijuana, with the Ambulance Corps in Africa and Italy, and with the Army in Hawaii and Japan, after which we spend a few post-war months with him in Virginia and New York. That Quince told the truth I've no doubt; that he wrote nothing more than a documentary, I've also no doubt.

"The unity of a plot does not consist, as some suppose, in its having one man as its subject. An infinity of things befall that one man, some of which it is impossible to reduce to unity; and in like manner there are many actions of one man which cannot be made to form one action. One sees therefore, the mistake of all the poets who have written a Heracleid, a Thesied, or similar poems. *They suppose that because Heracles was one man, the story also of Heracles must be one story.*" (My italics.)

I know that Aristotle was speaking of tragedy, not epic, much less of the novel, but I emphasize the last sentence because I think Bourjaily and many others disagree with it. Behold a man: look at him, listen to him, repeat what he thinks and says, record what he does and what is done to him, and you have a novel. I disagree. You have the truth but you don't, in the best and literal sense of the term, have a story.

Quince would like to think of his confessions as a specimen account of how a contemporary youth was spent. ". . . exhibiting no special depths of degradation, nor special heights of intellectual or sensual joy, but only such ordinary ones as most youths know." That, in itself,

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is a gratuitous assumption: I am not at all sure that most youths do not experience special depths of degradation and special heights of intellectual or sensual joy.

And without doubt representative characters in fiction do. Holden Caulfield and Huckleberry Finn do; as do Jake Barnes, Jay Gatsby, Joe Christmas, Anna Karenina and Hester Prynne. You start with the ordinary; you do not remain in it. To be representative, a character (or a book) must achieve individuality, that is to say, a kind of isolation. Quince does not. He neither achieves nor fails to achieve. Having said that, I must quote the end of Quince's story where, it seems, he does achieve something: courage.

"I'd remind myself of the way I'd stood there on the country road, bawling my lusty *No's,* with Hal grinning and pounding me; I'd feel that cool air again, and hear the shrill, crazy noise of the rooster crowing, and I'd catch enough of the spirit that came over me that early morning in Dayport to go on with my simple packing and avoid telephones. The spirit was a strongly physical thing—I felt it as a current in my legs and spine and in the back of my neck; it felt like courage, and it felt good."

Immediately afterwards, with characteristic honesty, Quincy remarks that he might have ended on an equally abrupt but negative chord, "as readily available and no less true." That is what I can't like. No book should end until it has to. *Confessions of a Spent Youth* is a long introduction to the story of Ulysses Quince.

REVIEWERS

Samuel Draper, who teaches English at Barnard College in Columbia University, is president of The American Friends of Michel de Ghelderode.

Charles B. Schmitt, who has a degree in engineering and is doing advanced worked in philosophy, has particular interest in the interrelations of different disciplines.

Thomas Curley, a New York novelist and critic, is a frequent contributor to The Commonweal.

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